

GROUP CARE WAITING LIST

A cap on the number of group care placements was first legislated in 1992. In 1996, the cap on the number of foster group care placements was changed to a statewide expenditure target for group foster care, which is established annually in the appropriations bill for the Department of Human Services. The department may exceed the budget target by not more than 5%, provided the overall budget for children and family services is not exceeded.

Representatives of the department and juvenile court services jointly agree on a formula each year to allocate a portion of the statewide expenditure target to each of the service areas. The formula is based on child population, historical usage and other indicators of need. The expenditure amount determined in accordance with the formula is the group foster care budget target for that service area. Representatives from the department and juvenile court services in each service area establish a plan for containing group foster care costs within the expenditure target for their service areas. State payment for group foster care is limited to placements in accordance with the service area's plan, and the court is not allowed to order a placement that does not comply with the plan. The service area manager communicates regularly with the chief juvenile court officer regarding the status of the service area's group care plan. If the projected expenditures for a service area exceed the targeted amount by more than 5%, the department and juvenile court services must review the cases of every child placed in group foster care to determine if any of the children may be discharged. If so, they petition the court for a disposition hearing and initiate any aftercare services that may be appropriate.

The SFY 07 appropriation for foster group care is \$37,084,884, which funds an average daily population of approximately 1140 beds. As of 09/05/2006, there are 111 children on the waiting list to be placed in foster group care. There is currently a waiting list in five service areas. The Council Bluffs, Dubuque, and Davenport service areas do not currently have a waiting list.